

**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & NATIONAL GUARD
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Fort Douglas Military Museum**

Monday, January 28, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Carlene Walker, Co-Chair
Rep. Wayne Harper, Co-Chair
Rep. Neil Hansen
Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Rep. Kenneth Sumsion

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sen. Sheldon Killpack
Sen. John Valentine
Rep. Glenn A. Donnelson
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Becky Lockhart
Rep. Patrick Painter

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sen. Fred Fife

STAFF PRESENT: Mark C. Bleazard, Fiscal Analyst
Rosemary Young, Committee Secretary

Note: A list of visitors and copy of handouts are filed with committee minutes.

Rep. Harper called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

National Guard

Mark Bleazard, Fiscal Analyst, reviewed the National Guard budget brief and the recommended base budget for FY 2009 at \$57,803,200 for two programs: \$1,280,800 for Administration and \$56,522,400 for Armory Maintenance. Federal Funds are expected to be approximately \$52,220,500 and are not required to be approved by the committee. The actual budget for FY 2007 was \$31,915,000. The amount appropriated by FY 2008 was \$72,450,100, but that has been revised to \$44,477,300 reflecting a decrease in federal funds. The budgeted FTE is 132.0 and Vehicles 30.0.

The tuition assistance program is helping educate 632 soldiers in the current fiscal year, and it is anticipated that the available funding of \$500,000 of one-time funding and \$500,000 of ongoing funding for FY 2008 will be committed by March 1, 2008. The analyst recommends that the committee consider funding of \$500,000 one-time from the General Fund to continue the tuition assistance program.

The National Guard has 70 State employees using IT services. Until recently these services were provided by the Federal Government, but they are no longer willing to provide this funding. The

Analyst recommends that the committee consider funding \$54,300 from the General Fund as a replacement of Federal Funds in IT services.

General Brian Tarbet, Adjutant General of the National Guard, stated that tuition assistance is critical for maintaining their strength of capable soldiers. They request that this tuition assistance be ongoing. They are always training new soldiers because of a roll over rate of 15 to 18% a year. Tuition assistance is only available to those actually serving in uniform. Col. Olsen informed the committee that they will be \$33,000 short for tuition this year. The tuition assistance can be used at any educational institution.

Keeping armories in repair is a major problem, and timely repairs are the best answer. Nine armories are in need of repair at present. It is best for the National Guard and for the state to have armories in small communities about the state rather than having them all consolidated at Camp Williams.

The number and types of units affect end strength and the Utah Guard's ability to bid at the federal level. Currently the Guard has a good mix of units including: aviation, engineers, artillery, intelligence, and special forces.

General Tarbet emphasized the importance of providing \$5,500 for insurance on the \$27,000,000 federally funded Tass Barracks and the need for an additional FTE. He pointed out that there has not been an increase in FTE's since before the year 2000. The National Guard office receives calls for all military issues in the state. He also mentioned that the intent language to make funds non-lapsing is critical. There was discussion about the possibility that there would be enough "turn-over" money in the budget to cover the \$5,500 for insurance.

There was some discussion about Camp Williams which is heavily used for training; therefore rumors as to its closing are unfounded. The new Mountain View Corridor highway might impact Camp Williams but actually will improve safety for soldiers getting to the Camp. Herriman City is proactive in making title owners aware of hazards of living by a military installation.

Veterans Affairs

The Analyst reminded the committee that House Bill 426 passed late in the 2007 Legislative Session created the Department of Veterans Affairs, but no funding was appropriated. The recommended base budget for FY 2009 is \$831,800 which funds three programs: \$350,700 for Administration; \$340,500 for Veterans' Cemetery; and \$140,600 for Veterans' Nursing Home. The recommendation is that the legislature approve existing intent language to the effect that all funds be nonlapsing.

The actual budget for FY 2007 was \$1,067,200. Appropriated for FY 2008 was \$1,114,900 which has been revised to \$1,228,000. Base budget recommendation for FY 2009 is \$831,800.
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The decrease reflects the \$300,000 one-time General Fund money appropriated last year. Budgeted FTE is 8 and 4 vehicles.

The Department is responsible to provide information to Utah veterans about programs available for all veterans through the Veterans' Administration. They are requesting \$200,000 to replace the one-time funds appropriated last year. The analyst recommends the committee consider appropriating \$200,000 ongoing General Fund.

The Veterans Affairs Fees are not to be changed and are as follows:

	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	# units
Veterans' Burial Fee 200	300.00	300.00	
Spouse/Dependent Burial Fee 45	400.00	400.00	
Saturday Burial Fee 2	500.00	500.00	
Lawn Vases 20	60.00	60.00	
Disinterment Single Depth Unknown		600.00	
Disinterment Double Depth Unknown		900.00	

Terry Schow, Director of Veterans Affairs, informed the committee that according to the census there are 160,000 veterans in Utah. The mandate of the department is to aid veterans and their families. Utah veterans receive about \$150,000,000 a year from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the form of compensation pension for service connected disabilities. Utah is below the national average in percentage of veterans receiving compensation pension and in the percentage of veterans enrolled in the veterans healthcare system. The challenge of the department is to reach out to veterans to help them receive benefits they are entitled to which help improve quality of life. Many veterans are reluctant to apply, but these benefits are not welfare. Part of the challenge is to identify the veterans. They may identify themselves in a drivers license application. The department is requesting ongoing funds to enable them to employ quality people who will have some job security.

Ongoing costs to the state for the nursing home include a federally required state officer who acts as a liaison between the patient, state Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Federal VA. The non-negotiable cost of this FTE is about \$140,000. The Federal VA then pays \$70/day for

each veteran in the nursing home which comes to a total of about \$3,500,000.

Dennis McFall, Deputy Director, advised the committee of a new law which will pay 100% of the cost of any veteran rated at 70% disability or higher. The new Ogden facility will not be certified for Medicaid. He also discussed how O & M costs are addressed as these costs will be covered in construction warranties or as part of the costs paid for each patient.

The Director brought up Department requests which did not appear on the Analyst's recommendations, namely 1 FTE at about \$45,000 for outreach and \$125,000 to continue on-going contracts for outreach. Veterans' benefits applications are so complicated that several hours are necessary to help veterans complete and submit them appropriately.

Robert S. Voyles, Director, Fort Douglas Museum, gave a brief history of Fort Douglas which was established in 1862 at the beginning of the Civil War and of the museum which was established in 1975. Most of Fort Douglas was turned over to the University of Utah in 1989 with the understanding that the state would operate and maintain the museum. Most of the fort became an athlete's village during the Olympics of 2002. The museum is still part of the U.S. Army Museum System of 150 museums and has access to artifacts which the army has. It is operated and maintained as part of the Utah National Guard annual budget.

The mission of the museum is to collect, preserve, and interpret Utah's military heritage including the history of veterans and Utah National Guard history. The Museum is partnering in the Utah War Sesquicentennial. Utah National Guard is linked with Morocco in a state partnership program. Upcoming exhibits were discussed. The museum is part of the Foothill Cultural Alliance. The budget for the museum from the State through the Utah National Guard is \$175,000 this year which is about 75% of the total budget. Another \$65,000 comes from the private sector, ZAP, etc. They are currently working on a capital campaign for major expansion of the museum. So far they have raised from the private sector \$1,400,000, but they are requesting \$500,000 for upgrading electrical, heating, and cooling systems through Capital Facilities.

Rep. Harper adjourned the meeting to a tour of the museum at 4:00 p.m.

Rep. Wayne Harper, Co-Chair

Sen. Carlene Walker, Co-Chair

